



For Immediate Release

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2013 Aquaponics Association Conference Draws National Experts Sept. 20-22 in Tucson, AZ

Aquaponic experts across the U.S. will offer sustainable solutions to grow healthy local food using up to 90% less water in highly productive fish and plant systems for home and commercial farmers

Tucson, AZ; August 20, 2013 – People wanting to learn how to grow their own food sustainably with aquaponics – the growing of fish and plants together in closed recirculating systems – will have an excellent opportunity to hear from two dozen aquaponics experts across the U.S. who will gather in **Tucson, AZ from September 20-22** at the [2013 Aquaponics Association National Conference](#).

Featured speakers include Virginia farmer **Joel Salatin**, author of eight books, including *The Sheer Ecstasy of Being A Lunatic Farmer* and *Folks, and This Ain't Normal*; **Max Meyers**, Ecological Designer, Permaculture Teacher, and Executive Director of the Mendocino Ecological Learning Center in California and Nor Cal Aquaponics; **James R. Hollyer**, Project Manager and Farm Food Safety Coach, College of Tropical Agriculture, University of Hawaii at Manoa; **Gene Giacomelli**, Professor of Ag and Biosystems Engineering and Director of the Controlled Environment Agriculture Center (CEAC) at the University of Arizona, Tucson. A full list of Conference [speaker bios](#) can be found at this link.

“Aquaponics has taken off in the U.S. for home growers,” says JD Sawyer, founder of [Colorado Aquaponics](#), a Denver-based company that runs a community scale aquaponics farm and offers aquaponic educational programs for individuals, families and communities who want to take charge of their own food production. “Aquaponic systems can be scaled up for community and commercial-scale production to offer an ongoing local food source, income generation, community engagement, and increased sustainability,” adds Sawyer, whose business partner Tawnya Sawyer, will be teaching “*Growing Food in a Food Desert*” on Saturday, Sept. 21 at the 2013 National Aquaponics Conference in Tucson.

Aquaponics integrates two symbiotic growing methods: **aquaculture** or fish farming, and **hydroponics**, growing plants without the need of soil. Aquaponics uses 70 to 90 percent less water than is consumed in conventional soil-based agriculture. Water is re-circulated in a constructed setting that mimics a dynamic pond-like eco-system. The result is a balanced and self-sustaining environment that utilizes natural bacterial cycles to convert fish waste to plant nutrients.

Reflecting national trends, this year’s workshop topics are organized by subject area, including Commercial Aquaponics, Community Aquaponics, Home Aquaponic Gardening, Sustainability/Off-Grid, Fish and Plants.

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Sample sessions include:

- Harnessing Sustainability to Uplift Communities
- Aquaponics as a Teaching Model in a High School Biology Class
- Lets Get Real: 10,000 lbs. of Fish Per Year and 200,000 Heads of Lettuce
- An Engineers View of Recirculating Aquaculture and Aquaponic Systems
- Building Resilient Food Systems Using the Skills and Materials Common to Our Communities
- Commercial Aquaponics: A Technology Roadmap For Scaling Up.

Click here for a full list of [breakout sessions](#).

In addition to presentations and workshops, the 2013 Aquaponics Association National Conference will offer tours of Tucson aquaponic operations. Tour sites include: the University of Arizona Controlled Agriculture Environment Center (CEAC), Manzo Elementary, Local Roots Aquaponics, Casey Townsend's Urban Homestead, and Eco Gro. Click here for [descriptions of tour sites](#).

The 2013 Aquaponics Conference will take place at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson. On September 1st, the Conference individual registration fee will increase from \$395 to \$445 for Aquaponics Association members and from \$440 to \$490 for non-members.

About Aquaponics

Aquaponics is the productive combination of aquaculture or fish farming, and hydroponics, growing plants without the need of soil. In aquaponics, fish and plants are grown together in a dynamic sustainable environment. The fish waste feeds the plants using organic hydroponic techniques. The plants, in turn, clean and filter the water that returns to the fish environment.

The practice of aquaponics has ancient roots in China, Egypt, India, Thailand, and by the Aztec people who cultivated agricultural islands known as "Chinampas." The modern technique of growing fish and plants synergistically became popular in the past several years largely in response to pressing issues, such as food security and food independence, healthy and organic produce, local and sustainable food growing, food safety, and water conservation.

About The Aquaponic Association

Established in 2011, the Aquaponics Association was founded to promote aquaponics in North America. Major efforts for this emerging industry include educating others about the benefits and safety of aquaponically-grown food and to serve as an educational resource for both commercial-scale aquaponics farmers and home-based aquaponic growers . The Aquaponics Association is currently establishing standards and certifications for the rapidly growing commercial aquaponic industry. More information is available at: www.aquaponicsassociation.org.